REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8, 10, 11, and 13-17 were pending as of the action mailed on August 23, 2007. Claims 1, 8, 10 and 11 are in independent form.

Claims 1, 4-8, 10-11, and 14-17 are being amended. No new matter has been added. The claims were amended to recite, among other things, that the document appearance is readable and contains the text content of the document, and that the text in an unambiguous reading order is converted into a canonical form. The claims were also amended to distinguish more succinctly the two kinds of control codes recited in the claims, namely the first codes that relate to the approval codes in the document, and the second codes that relate to the text in the document. Finally, the claims were amended in different ways to reflect the fact that the external entity handling the print out is part of the workflow in a workflow system, and not some final output of the workflow system.

Reconsideration of the action and allowance of the application are respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Interview Summary

The applicant thanks Examiner Homayounmehr for courtesy of a telephonic interview on October 19, 2003. The Examiner reviewed the bases of his rejections of claims 7 and 8.

Section 103 Rejections

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0069179 ("Slater"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,634,559 ("Shioda").

However, neither Slater nor Shioda teach a human-readable print out of an electronic document in a workflow system for use with an external entity that does not exchange electronic documents with the workflow system, as part of a workflow in the workflow system. In addition, neither Slater nor Shioda teach generating a control code from a canonical for of the text content of an electronic document that is printed out for use in validate the text of the print out.

Slater, for example, only discloses printing a signed version of the electronic document, without printing any control codes for validation of the text of the print out, and Shioda teaches a data sheet that has only a reduced image or images the human-readable form of the document (col. 2, lines 48-53; Figs. 1-5), and that is not human-readable.

Finally, neither Slater nor Shioda appear to contemplate a workflow system that handles a workflow that includes within it a step performed by an external entity that does not exchange electronic documents with the workflow system.

For the foregoing reasons, the applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 1, and of the other independent claims, which correspond to claim 1, should be withdrawn. .

Claims 3-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Slater, and further in view of Shioda. Claims 3-7 depend from claim 1 and are in condition for allowance, for substantially the same reasons as described above.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Slater, and further in view of Shioda. The Examiner asserts: "Limitations of claim 8 are directed to receiving and verifying the documents generated in claims 1-7 above. Figs. 4-6 and associated text describe receiving and validating the digital documents." (The applicant assumes that the Examiner was referring to Figs. 4-6 of Slater.)

Figs. 4-6 of Slater do not teach the subject matter of claim 8, because claim 8 is directed, not towards receiving and verifying an electronic document, as described in Slater, but towards validating a human-readable print out of an electronic document.

The computer program product of claim 8 first converts the human-readable print out into a canonical form. As described in the specification, such a conversion may include replacing all white spaces, e.g., tabs and multiple white spaces, with a single white space character. Slater never performs such a conversion, because Slater does not contemplate validating a human-readable print out of an electronic document. Instead, Slater provides "systems and methods for digitally signing and verifying electronic documents." (¶ 11 and various figures) The only use for which Slater discusses printing the electronic document is archival: "each signer often desires a copy of what they digitally signed. This can be accomplished by emailing the

document to the signer after it has been signed, by printing a signed version of the document, saving a copy of the document's current stage to a disk, and the like." (¶ 64)

The computer program product of claim 8 then validates the text content by verifying the control codes against the canonical form. In Figs. 4 and 6 and associated text, Slater only describes validating the schema of an XML or ERML document, or, more generally, validating the format and structure of a document, not the content of a document. See ¶¶ 85-87, 89-91. In Fig. 5 and associated text, Slater does not describe any sort of validation at all.

Although Slater does discuss validation of the content of a document in conjunction with Figs. 3A-3E, and, more specifically, in ¶ 63 ("Reconstructing an electronic document ensures that the electronic document has not been changed or altered") and ¶ 66 ("Reconstructing the document allows the recorder to verify or validate the electronic document"), Slater's validation method is different from what is recited in the claims, because it is based on reconstruction of an earlier version of an electronic document from later versions of the electronic document by stripping selected information from certain XML or ERML tags. ¶¶ 62, 74-75.

Finally, neither Slater nor Shioda describe accessing a portal of a workflow system to perform authentication and validation functions. This feature allows an external entity that does not exchange electronic documents with the workflow system to authenticate the approval marks and validate the print out. Thus, neither Slater nor Shioda, nor the combination thereof, disclose the subject matter of amended claim 8, and claim 8 and its dependent and corresponding claims is in condition for allowance.

Claims 10, 11, and 13-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Slater, and further in view of Shioda. The Examiner asserts: "Limitations of claims 10, 11, 13-17 are substantially the same as limitations of claims 1, 3-7 above." Therefore, for substantially the same reasons set forth above, claims 10, 11, 13-17 are also in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the applicant submits that all the claims are in condition for allowance.

By responding in the foregoing remarks only to particular positions taken by the examiner, the applicant does not acquiesce with other positions that have not been explicitly addressed. In addition, the applicant's selecting some particular arguments for the patentability of a claim should not be understood as implying that no other reasons for the patentability of that claim exist. Finally, the applicant's decision to amend or cancel any claim should not be understood as implying that the applicant agrees with any positions taken by the examiner with respect to that claim or other claims.

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Respectfully submitted,

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